

and a tree-like network including such a line terminator and such an element controller, as described hereinafter.

A first aspect of the invention is a method to perform central control of an in-line element in a tree-like network by a line terminator included in said network together with a plurality of network terminators of which at least one network terminator is coupled via said in-line element to said line terminator by dedicated a branch and a common branch, respectively, wherein the method includes the steps of: (i) determining by said line terminator a first plurality of bits according to an identification of a selected element and a second plurality of bits according to an identification of a locally predefined function, said selected element being selected out of a set of in-line elements comprising at least said in-line element in order to execute said locally predefined function; (ii) including by said line terminator in a grant message said first plurality of bits and said second plurality of bits; and (iii) forwarding said grant message by said line terminator to said element in order to thereby impose execution of said locally predefined function according to said second plurality of bits upon said selected element according to said first plurality of bits.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a line terminator to perform central control of a plurality of in-line elements in a tree-like network, said tree-like network including a plurality of network terminators being coupled via said plurality of in-line elements to said line terminator by dedicated branches and a common branch, respectively, wherein said line terminator includes means for performing each of the above method steps.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided an element controller associated to a selected element of a set of in-line elements in a tree-like network, to impose execution of a locally predefined function upon said selected element under the central control of a line terminator, said line terminator being coupled via said set of in-line elements comprising said selected element to a plurality of network terminators by a common branch and dedicated branches, respectively, wherein said element controller is downstream coupled to said line terminator and includes